

CONSERVATION *Showcase*



Equine Operation Adapts to New Rule

In February 2009, one month before the State of New Jersey adopted the Agricultural Waste Management Rule, Professor Kelly Munz, Chair of the Equine Studies Department at Centenary College, knew the law would impact the College's Equestrian Center at Long Valley. That's why she didn't hesitate to call the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Hackettstown after receiving their letter offering to help equine operators plan and implement activities to achieve compliance with the new law.

With a goal of producing "quality horsemen" at Centenary, Professor Munz was highly motivated to ensure that the Equestrian Center meet the new regulation. In addition to the 140 students enrolled in equine programs at Centenary, there are 30 to 35 children from the community who come to the Center each week for riding lessons. These lessons are overseen by the 10 to 12 students earning certification in therapeutic riding instruction through Therapeutic Riding at Centenary (TRAC), a program directed by Octavia Brown.

Navigating the requirements of this law was a new aspect of equine management for New Jersey, and Munz wanted Centenary to set an example for the equine community.

The first step was an onsite visit with Jillian Jaworski, Agricultural Resource Specialist with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, who evaluated the field conditions and developed a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) for the Center.

It was common practice among horse farms to pile manure someplace on the farm before the regulation went into effect. At the time the CNMP was written, the college had an agreement with a local farmer who was taking the manure from the Center and applying it to his fields. With the termination of that arrangement in June 2010, it became evident that a manure storage facility for temporary storage was the right option for the operation.

Building this structure would help the Center comply with the



Jillian Jaworski and Kelly Munz at the facility site one week before construction began in December 2010



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regulation well in advance of the State's March 2012 deadline. More importantly, though, their action would protect the health of the watershed. Stacking horse manure in the storage facility prevents phosphorous, nitrogen and pathogens in the manure from entering surface or ground water and contaminating it.

The manure storage facility was sized according to the number of horses at the Center and the anticipated length of time the manure would be stored. There are about 100 horses at the Center. Because wet and snowy conditions are common to the area and access to the facility could be hampered at times, the plan provided for a slightly extended storage time. The type of bedding used for the horses was also considered in the design process. Since the most practical location for the facility was in a pasture, a road was needed to provide access for the regular removal of the manure.

Complying with the State regulation has introduced additional costs to an industry that already has high expenses. "Jillian bringing available funding opportunities to light was certainly helpful to the school," Munz says, "and it sped the process, knowing where to apply for financial assistance."

The Centenary College Equestrian Center property is enrolled in the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program and is permanently preserved farmland. Since the property is preserved, the College was eligible to receive funding through the New Jersey State Cost Share Program, and has received technical and financial assistance with the stacking pad and access road.

The construction process began in November 2010 and the structure was completed in April 2011.

Munz is negotiating with vendors who are interested in hauling the manure from the Center's dry stacking facility.

The location of the stacking pad and access road have changed the configuration of the pasture area. Centenary has requested assistance from NRCS and hopes to install access control fencing to exclude the horses from the stacking pad and vegetative filter area, a water line, and watering facility for that field.

Kelly Munz is appreciative of the technical assistance and guidance she received. She says, "Jillian made things pretty easy. She basically held my hand through the whole process." For those whose work is about helping people help the land, that's good to hear.

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New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) published new Animal Waste Management Rules in the New Jersey State Register on March 16, 2009. Information on the Animal Waste Management Rule is online at <http://www.esc.rutgers.edu/awmp/SOPanimalwastemgmtrule.htm>. Information on compliance with the Animal Waste Management Rule is also available from local NRCS and Rutgers Cooperative Extension offices.

